

Today's youth should lead fight against climate change

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Body

As an optimistic 16-year-old girl, I believe it is necessary to hope for change. And as the student trustee of the Peel District School Board, I believe it is necessary to work toward change.

I never knew that in my 16 years of life, I would have to see the light of the day where the very ground we stand on would beg us to save it from trembling and that my sisters would one day question whether or not they should bring a child into this world.

On Sept. 27, I had the opportunity to participate and speak at the climate action rallies about the importance of striking Fridays. I spoke passionately about the reason we were all gathered together. It was not to protest for climate change but to recognize that we are in a global climate crisis.

We believe this is the greatest threat to humanity, but when will we understand that we are the greatest threat? Because our actions as a society are not only contributing to the collapse of ecosystems but also our futures.

The Climate Action rally united thousands and thousands of global citizens. Standing with me, were children, youth, parents and even seniors of all different religions, faiths, ethnicities and genders.

Before attending the strike, I believed the movement would spark a chain reaction of change, as it would encourage others to wake up to the threat. Instead, many blamed the politicians who also spoke at the rally for their lack of action.

This is what pains me the most, that we will allow the fear and anger to die down.

But in reality, leadership changes, campaigns change, platforms change, but what remains consistent is us; the electorate.

If this strike has taught us anything, it is that the science is real, the evidence is there, and we as a global nation all know this.

Now the question is, are we going to sit tight and do nothing or are we going to make it our moral obligation to take action?

The youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow; but that does not mean we cannot be the leaders today. In this climate crisis, it may be that we are the only ones who can make climate action one of our priorities.

But this starts with education. And so we must empower our educators to incorporate climate literacy in our classes, while making reference to the pre-existing eco-friendly actions already being practised in other countries. This way, we are creating a whole new generation that is mindful of the effects of their actions on the environment.

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As individual students, we can use our involvement in school organizations to tackle consumerism by hosting eco-fashion competitions that would entail creating fashion pieces using recyclable material. We can organize more ideathons that revolve around creating eco-friendly and cost-effective innovations for reducing carbon footprints to kick-start action. Kenisha Arora is a student trustee with the Peel District School Board.

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